



# INTEGRATING GENDER IN Power Operations

Globally, the power industry is expected to invest \$2.20 trillion in energy generation between 2017 and 2012.<sup>1</sup> The sector is experiencing one of the most profound transformations of the past 100 years, driven by technological and market disruptions, but 13% of the global population still lacks access to modern electricity—predominately in Africa and South Asia. Without electricity, women and girls spend more hours fetching fuelwood and water; and it is more difficult for clinics to refrigerate vaccines, schoolchildren to do homework at night, and businesses to be run competitively.<sup>2</sup>

As the sector responds to the challenges of clean, reliable, and affordable energy services—there are emerging pathways to close gender gaps and bolster performance across the energy value chain—by including women as potential employees, owners of SMEs, and as consumers. Women also comprise another important market segment for the power industry—as community members living around the footprint of power projects, they could be powerful distribution agents to help reach last-mile connection customers and/or behavior change catalysts to help improve the adoption of new energy technologies and products.

## GENDER IS AN IFC CORPORATE PRIORITY

Gender is a key cross-cutting strategic theme under IFC 3.0 and is included as part of IFC's capital commitments. IFC has long taken a comprehensive approach to reduce gender inequality—from supporting opportunities and improved working conditions for women employees, helping expand access to financial services for women, investing in innovative technologies that expand choices of female consumers, and supporting business skills and leadership training for women entrepreneurs.

As part of the recent capital increase, IFC has committed to:

- quadrupling financing for women and women-led SMEs.
- increasing representation of women on boards.
- more than doubling commitments to financial institutions targeting women.
- systematically integrating gender into projects.

By improving how gender is integrated in INR projects, IFC can further demonstrate its commitment to improving gender equality globally.

## Increasing gender equity in power operations can...

	KEY ISSUE	BUSINESS CASE	CASE STUDY	KEY ENTRY POINTS FOR IFC PROJECTS
 <p>...strengthen the talent pool and lead to improvements in organizational efficiency and profit</p>	<p>Few women on boards: Women represent 5% of board executives and 16% of board members in power and utility companies. At the current rate, it would take as long as 72 years to reach 40% representation.<sup>3</sup></p> <p>Low workforce participation and pipeline shortage of female leaders: Globally, the renewable energy sector workforce is 35% female, with 28% performing technical roles, but in the US there is still an 18% gender pay gap in the utilities sector.<sup>5</sup> In distribution companies, departments like technical field operations, high-voltage line operations, and field maintenance, which have the greatest number of employees, are male dominated.<sup>6</sup></p>	<p>A recent IFC study connects increased gender diversity at the top with enhanced environmental, social, and governance standards, which improves corporate performance.<sup>4</sup></p> <p>For the second consecutive year, the top 20 most gender diverse utility firms had a 15% higher ROE than the bottom 20.<sup>7</sup> Advancing women's equality in labor markets could contribute between US\$12 trillion and US\$28 trillion to global annual GDP.<sup>8</sup></p>	<p>USAID's Engendering Utilities program analyzed the role of women in the power sector across 14 global utilities. Changes were made to HR policies in seven utilities to increase gender equity, and trainings were provided to build HR and employee capacity. Most utilities saw increases in female training participants, interns, job applicants, and trainee hires. Utilities also saw more women promoted and identified as high potential for succession planning, increasing the number of women in succession plans from 83 in 2015 to 387 in 2017.</p> <p>Energy projects in India, Dominican Republic, and Comoros have demonstrated that women employees have helped increase bill payment, active connections, and overall revenues. Through targeted campaigns and hiring programs, female employees can engage with consumers and communities on improving bill payments and reducing electricity theft.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Assess and revise HR policies and materials to encourage and support male and female applicants, recruitment, retention, and promotion</li> <li>▶ Conduct gender audits to understand challenges with attracting, retaining, and promoting women and men employees</li> <li>▶ Assess and update uniforms, PPE, and workplace design and infrastructure to support best performance by women and men employees</li> <li>▶ Periodically assess incidences, risks, and reporting and referral systems related to gender-based violence (GBV)</li> <li>▶ Identify gender champions who lead and coordinate gender activities</li> <li>▶ Provide training for HR, management, and staff on the value of a gender diverse management and teams</li> <li>▶ Obtain global gender certification (e.g. EDGE Gender, UNDP) and/or national gender seal</li> </ul>
 <p>... strengthen supply chains and help keep costs down</p>	<p>Weak business and financial capacity: Women-owned SMEs tend to operate smaller businesses, rely more on family networks, and are often underserved by financial institutions.</p> <p>28% of SMEs globally are women-owned and about 70% of these SMEs in developing countries are underserved by financial institutions, presenting a market opportunity of \$1.5 trillion to invest in women-owned SMEs.<sup>9</sup></p>	<p>Women-owned SMEs are well-placed to engage in last-mile distribution of off-grid solutions and related sectors such as catering, etc. A study in Kenya showed that women cookstove entrepreneurs outsold their male counterparts by more than three times.</p>	<p>Companies like Solar Sister and Barefoot College are using a 'train the trainer approach' to build the capacity of local communities and networks to help distribute, maintain, and repair energy technologies such as solar lanterns, clean cookstoves, and appliances.</p> <p>IFC's Lighting Asia Program: Women sales agents increased public knowledge of solar lighting products from 25% to 60%. IFC's Lighting Asia partnered with solar distributors in India, such as Frontier Markets, to develop a network of women entrepreneurs known as Solar Sahelis. Women at Frontier Markets have sold over 100K solar products and increased public awareness of solar solutions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Provide training and capacity building for local women-owned businesses, focusing on basic business and financial management skills, technical skills, networking, and gender-inclusive hiring to promote local economic development and access to supply chain opportunities</li> <li>▶ Develop integrated supplier portals to improve local supplier access to procurement opportunities</li> <li>▶ Assess client procurement policies (such as size of contracts, repayment periods) to identify opportunities to increase access for small and medium enterprises, and develop supplier diversity strategies</li> <li>▶ Partner with local finance institutions and Banking on Women program to increase access to finance and reduce financing gap for women-owned businesses</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> [Global Renewable Energy Outlook 2018](#). Frost and Sullivan, 2018

<sup>2</sup> [Accelerating SDG 7 Achievement, Policy Brief 12 Energy and Gender](#). United Nations, 2018

<sup>3</sup> [Index of Women in Power and Utilities](#). Ernst and Young, 2017. See also: [IFC Corporate Governance Fact Sheet: Women on Boards and in Corporate Leadership](#), IFC 2018.

<sup>4</sup> [Women in Business Leadership Boost ESG Performance: Existing Body of Evidence Makes Compelling Case](#). IFC, 2018

<sup>5</sup> [Renewable Energy and Jobs, Annual Review 2017](#). IRENA, 2017

<sup>6</sup> [Engendering Utilities: Improving Gender Diversity in Power Sector Utilities](#). USAID, 2016

	KEY ISSUE	BUSINESS CASE	CASE STUDY	KEY ENTRY POINTS FOR IFC PROJECTS
 <p><b>...strengthen social license to operate and improve development impacts</b></p>	<p>Community Buy-in and Reducing Risk: In generation and transmission projects, there are gender disparities in resettlement and compensation for land. The lack of gender informed community outreach can create project delays and disrupt community buy-in for the investment.<sup>10</sup></p>	<p>Including women in community stakeholder engagements helps companies understand the full range of issues that can be addressed and can help avoid project delays. Addressing barriers such as childcare, transport, and permission to participate can improve women's participation during consultation processes.</p>	<p>The Noor-Ouarzazate concentrating solar power (CSP) complex in Morocco has made a positive gender-smart community footprint by swapping community investments in place of cash compensation (which would benefit only male landowners), and including some projects to directly and positively impact women. Provisions for a safe and positive work environment for women made it possible for them to work in a wider range of positions, from traditional roles (catering, cleaning, admin) to more technical roles (quality control, health and safety unit, topography and welding).<sup>11</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Conduct consultations that take gender and cultural norms into account (for instance, gender-segregated consultations vs. gender-inclusive)</li> <li>▶ Integrate gender into the methodology and analysis for all community assessments, resettlement programs, and community development initiatives</li> <li>▶ Train community engagement staff on opportunities, challenges, and entry points to integrate gender across activities</li> </ul>
 <p><b>... better target consumers, beneficiaries, and users of energy services</b></p>	<p>Men and women have different energy needs: Women play a primary role as consumers of household energy yet have limited access to energy services, and often have limited input into financial decisions. Men and women also benefit differently from increased access to electricity and a reduction in time poverty. Access to clean, reliable energy reduces time burdens of domestic responsibilities for women to allow for income-generating activity or leisure.</p>	<p>Understanding the consumer market can improve policy and pricing decisions as well as the better design, marketing and outreach of energy products. Designing for and marketing to women allows companies to target new customers, as well as to boost sales to existing customers. This strategy can open new markets and strengthen existing ones.<sup>12</sup></p> <p>Also, access to reliable electricity increases the propensity of rural women to work outside the home by approximately 23%.<sup>13</sup></p>	<p>In Mali, women reported saving 2.5 hours a day on processing grains when traditional hand milling was replaced by a diesel-driven mill. In Northern Tanzania, the time saved by women queuing for grain milling when the mills switched from diesel to electricity was sufficient for the women to be able to set up their own small enterprises.</p> <p>Rural electrification raised female employment in South Africa by 9.5%, likely because it released women from home production and enabled microenterprises.<sup>14</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Understand and map out distinct needs and preferences of client's products/services by men and women, to see if there is an unmet demand</li> <li>▶ Consider redesigning or creating new products, services, and platforms to retain and/or increase women customers (including e.g. marketing)</li> </ul>
 <p><b>...improve safety and reduce gender-based violence (GBV) within power projects</b></p>	<p>Reduce health-related risks to workers. Power projects often introduce new roadways which can change traffic and migration patterns and introduce health and safety issues such as gender-based violence, prostitution, and sexually transmitted diseases.<sup>15</sup></p> <p>Workers (mostly male) also face exposure to hazardous work such as electrical wiring and chemical handling.</p>	<p>Providing support to prevent and address gender-based violence can reduce absenteeism. Research shows that in Papua New Guinea, cost of staff time lost due to GBV amounts to 2% to 9% respectively of companies' total salary bills and on average, each staff member loses 11.1 days of work per year.<sup>16</sup></p>	<p>A hydropower project in Indonesia developed an action plan to address project findings that an (a) influx of workers would likely increase public health risks for both construction workers and the local population and (b) relocating households during resettlement would have potential health impacts. Mitigating activities included HIV/AIDS awareness training, counseling services on transmission and prevention, routine diagnostic examinations, and condom distribution.<sup>17</sup></p> <p>IFC developed a Model Policy on Family and Sexual Violence, which is now being implemented by 18 companies in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Conduct a GBV risk assessment and define a mitigation strategy</li> <li>▶ Institute a strongly-worded and widely disseminated anti-sexual harassment policy, safe and anonymous complaints procedure, appropriate remediation measures, training, monitoring, and evaluation</li> <li>▶ Support reporting, referral, and support mechanisms in the community, and that companies are connected to local authorities to monitor and respond to any changes in violence associated with mining operations</li> </ul>

<sup>7</sup> [Index of Women in Power and Utilities](#). Ernst and Young, 2017

<sup>8</sup> [The Power of Parity: How Advancing Women's Equality can add \\$12 Trillion to Global Growth](#). McKinsey Global Institute, 2015

<sup>9</sup> [MSME Finance Gap](#). IFC, 2017

<sup>10</sup> [Getting to Gender Equality in Electricity Infrastructure](#). World Bank, ESMAP, 2018

<sup>11</sup> [Beyond Electricity: How Morocco's Solar Plan is Benefiting Communities and Women and Shaping the Region's Future](#). World Bank, ESMAP, 2018.

<sup>12</sup> [Why Measuring Energy Access for Women Makes Smart Business: The Case of Lao PDR](#). World Bank, 2017.

<sup>13</sup> Rural electrification and employment in poor countries: Evidence from Nicaragua. Louise Grogan and Asha Sadanand, 2013

<sup>14</sup> The effects of rural electrification on employment: New evidence from South Africa. Taryn Dinkleman, 2011

<sup>15</sup> [Building a Safer World: Toolkit for Integrating GBV Prevention and Response into USAID Energy and Infrastructure Projects](#). USAID, 2015

<sup>16</sup> [Violence in Papua New Guinea: The Cost to Business](#). ODI, 2015

<sup>17</sup> [Getting to Gender Equality in Electricity Infrastructure](#). World Bank, ESMAP, 2018

# Integrating Gender into Investment Projects—Operational Entry Points

The INR gender team is available to help IOs at the following entry points:

<b>Concept Review</b>	<b>IDENTIFY GENDER OPPORTUNITIES</b>	Identify ways in which women and men may be impacted by and benefit from the project differently, including accessing employment, supply chain, and benefits/risks. Assess actions that will maximise opportunities and minimise risks for the project.
<b>Appraisal</b>	<b>SUPPORT</b>	Support for teams through review of project documents, ToRs, and input on project design.
	<b>SCOPING/DIAGNOSTIC WITH CLIENTS</b>	Identify actions to close potential gender gaps, as part of an investment project, or as opportunities to collaborate over time, using the broader suite of IFC offerings.
<b>Board Approval</b>	<b>BOARD PAPERS</b>	Provide input and language to address gender in board papers.
<b>Disbursement/Supervision</b>	<b>CLIENT SUPPORT</b>	For implementation of activities identified during scoping/diagnostic including trainings and capacity building.
	<b>MONITORING</b>	Help to measure and report on business and development impact of gender actions. Document and apply lessons learned to future investments and client engagement.

## Resources for Gender-Smart Solutions in Power

### [Renewable Energy: A Gender Perspective](#) | IRENA, 2019

Research survey report analyzing women’s role in renewable energy employment and decision-making globally. Data covers topics such as women on boards and leadership roles, challenges and barriers to entry within STEM fields, and organizational and cultural norms.

### [Gender-Responsive Geothermal Generation in El Salvador](#) | USAID, IUCN, 2019

A case study showcasing how La Geo, geothermal energy utility, integrated gender issues across its business model and operations and adhered to gender laws and CSR policy—covering issues such as livelihood activities, reforestation and mitigation efforts, social infrastructure development, conservation work, education, and health initiatives.

### [Levers of Change: How Global Trends Impact Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Access to Sustainable Energy](#) | Sustainable Energy for All, ENERGIA, UKAID, 2018

Scoping report examining women’s access to energy solutions in relation to six global trends: growing decentralization and affordability of solar and other renewable energy services, growing use of mobile money/payments, increasing rates of women’s entrepreneurship, proliferating urbanization, and fast growing displaced populations living in humanitarian camps.

### [Accelerating SDG 7 Achievement, Policy Brief 12 Energy and Gender](#) | United Nations, 2018

High level policy brief highlighting key messages and priority actions for policy and decision makers with focus on UN SDGs.

### [Gender-Inclusive Approaches in the Energy Sector](#) | Asian Development Bank, 2018

Brief and tip sheet on how to develop a gender and socially inclusive framework for the energy sector—examples of assessment questions, sample indicators, and project results.

### [Getting to Gender Equality in Electricity Infrastructure](#) | World Bank Group, ESMAP, 2018

Technical report on gender issues within generation, transmission, and distribution projects with a specific focus on land and labor with case studies from projects on hydropower in Nepal, concentrated solar power in Morocco and electricity distribution in Senegal.

### [IFC Guidance Notes on Gender: Investment, Advisory \(Internal\)](#) | IFC Gender Secretariat, 2018

These notes provide guidance that can help teams to assess if there are opportunities to close gender gaps in their projects, while being consistent with the requirements for the Gender Flag by including a gender gap analysis, an intervention, and a corresponding indicator.

#### **For more information, please contact:**

Adriana Eftimie | [aeftimie@ifc.org](mailto:aeftimie@ifc.org)  
 Vanessa Janik | [vjanik@ifc.org](mailto:vjanik@ifc.org)  
 Jennifer Scott | [jscott1@ifc.org](mailto:jscott1@ifc.org)

<https://www.commddev.org/topics/gender/>

